1: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1933 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu



But the mortuary rites are not over even after the survivors are released from the various food and sex taboos. The making of the *malanggan*, perhaps years later, is still part of the rites. These ritual carvings have already been mentioned in the descriptions of the initiation rites, of the economic structure, and of the mortuary rites. It remains to present as a whole the essential information about them.

769 ● 778

### *MALANGGANS*

*Malanggans* are made for the dead—men, women, and children—by the surviving members of their clan. Sometimes, as at Maling's funeral, the *malanggan* is made at the time of death, but this is unusual, and happens only for an old and important person. More often it is made a year or more later, when the necessary wealth has been collected and other preparations have been made, and frequently it will be made for several clan relatives at once. Sometimes the circumcision of the young boys is the occasion for making one. Another time the village will decide to have *malanggan* rites, although there is no overt excuse, and everyone in the village who wishes to make one will do so at the same time. The rites for the combined *malanggans* last for three or four days, with the appropriate dances and feasts. I saw one such set of rites at the village of Lovapaul. After the rites the *malanggans* are usually destroyed.

There are many different kinds of *malanggans*, each one with its particular name, form, and attendant rites. First the *malanggans* are divided into a number of large groups, such as the *Sasabwan*, *Kolebmur*, *Ahsisinga*, *Walik*, *Longabun*, *Amuraskambo*, *Warawara*,[1] and all those in each one of these groups are considered of the same type, and have similar rites. The names of some of the individual *malanggans* within these large groups are:

[1] This is only a partial list of the *malanggan* groups.

1: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1933 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu



*Sasąbwan*

769 778 *Aruppekleia:* Fish.
*Eiaiderauf:* Fish.
*Anuf:* Fish.
*Solennau:* Figure of man.
*Lysisi:* Figure of man.
*Mundäleno:* Figure of man.
*Leirau:* Figure of woman.
*Dăwgandau:* Figure of woman.
*Kortämuth:* Figure of woman.
*Aluderi:* Figure of man.
*Anbowugul:* Figure of man.
*Winabo:* Figure of woman.
*Kummermeia.*
*Araraum.*
*Logarawai.*

*Kolebmur*

*Araraun:* This also appears in class above.
*Lekiu.*
*Kuwawuwu.*
*Balanei.*
*Kuleipanga.*
*Ambeli.*
*Ammaris.*
*Amarindan.*
*Avutimisi.*
*Agasmuggawuh.*

*Ahsisinga*

*Awainu:* Small eagle.
*Kambărwurua.*
*Aganlă.*
*Kaupus.*
*Rangină.*
*Leiamă.*
*Sinbanimous.*
*Ahmersilau.*
*Kambarizo.*
*Amutnăt.*

*Amuraskambo*

*Lahwinamuhdă.*
*Belazăm.*
*Milimindăs.*
*Abilăk.*
*Lawaiangas.*
*Anbutsio.*
*Amundacssuraumbo.*
*Amatangilagila.*
*Amandto.*

*Warawara*

*Karawas.*
*Azela.*
*Auwafan.*
*Abauurang.*
*Avara.*
*Aflinkabik.*
*Ahmitnas.*
*Wawarapesinganau.*
*Sesoli.*
*Luhkundo.*
*Sauwood.*
*Sulangit.*
*Gawit.*

1: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1933 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu



The *malanggans* vary in appearance; some are the figure of one man, while others are intricate carvings containing the figures of several people, each one representing a dead clan relative. Still others have various birds, fish, and snakes on them. The animals used seem to be merely familiar ones of the environment, and without any totemic significance. Another kind, such as the *Warawara*, is finely decorative, with the *kepkep* (breast ornament) in the centre. Each *malanggan* will also be known as a male or female one. They are usually brightly painted, red and yellow being the dominant colours. A photograph facing page 120 shows one of them.

The right to make each *malanggan* is owned by an individual, usually an important old man of a clan. The other members of his clan are considered as part-owners with him, and would be reimbursed at a sale of one. The old man is more a custodian. He may sell this privilege to another person, and the individual making the sale loses the right to make this particular *malanggan*, and he must therefore later buy the right to make another one. The description of one such sale has already been described.[1] It was a big economic transaction, and one of the main ways in which large amounts of currency pass from one group to another.

The *malanggan* is made by a skilled carver, who is paid for his services. The clan owner sits beside him and shows him the design. The work is always done in a small house erected for the purpose, and only the male clan owners of the *malanggan* besides the carver are allowed to enter it. The house is destroyed after the work is finished.

Myths about the origin of different *malanggans* give the source as a dream. For instance, in the myth of the origin of the *Walik malanggan*, a man named Lunguma, who lived in Tabar, fell asleep while he was working in his garden. While asleep his *gas* appeared in a dream and showed him

[1] See pp. 210–224.

1: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1933 OM10 New Ireland-OM10
Lesu



how to make the *Walik malanggan* and all the dances and other aspects of the rites connected with it. Just before he died Lunguma passed on this information to a clan relative, and so it has come down to the present time. This is a rather typical dream origin for most of the *malanggans*, except that for a few of them a woman has the dream. In that case she passes on the knowledge immediately to her son. The setting in most of these myths is in Tabar.[1]

Accompanying each *malanggan* are special rites, including dances, feasts, and other ritual, which have been described in their particular context. Many of the dances are interchangeable for different *malanggans*, but certain aspects of the rites, as, for example, the women walking to neighbouring villages and collecting food on the way in the concluding rites for the *Walik malanggan* (displayed at the initiation rites), and the particular way in which the women group themselves for their feast at the *Sasabwan malanggan* rites (at Logagon), are peculiar to these particular *malanggans*. But regardless of the differences in appearance and in details of rites, they all have the same general function. While they are made in honour of the dead, their making bestows prestige on the living. Should a Lesu man not make a *malanggan* for a dead mother or maternal uncle, he would fall very low in prestige, but there would be no effect on the dead person or his ghost. For, to the Melanesian native, the *malanggan* represents wealth, and not to have this for the proper ritual uses is indeed a serious matter. The identification of the carvings with wealth came out in many ways: if a man did not make a *malanggan*, it was scornfully said by everyone in the community that he did not have any wealth; in the speeches at the *malanggan* rites, stressing the wealth which had gone into their making; in an incident

[1] It seems likely that the *malanggans* came originally from the Tabar group of islands, and an investigation there might disclose more facts about their real nature.

1: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1933 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu



which occurred shortly before my departure, when some old men were watching my servants pack a few *malanggans* I was taking back with me. I had explained that they would be carefully housed (in a museum), and that "my people," who had never seen these *malanggans*, would then know about them. After my explanation the old men very seriously urged me to tell these people who would look at the *malanggans* that they were not just carved, painted pieces of wood, but that I must make the people understand all the work and wealth that had gone into the mal ng of them—the large taro crops, the many pigs, all th *tsera*, the cooking for the feast, and other essentials of the rites. These, said the old men of Lesu, are the important things to remember about *malanggans*.

## SUMMARY

The Lesu man has certain fundamental and universal problems to meet, and his knowledge, magic, and religion indicate how he meets them. The knowledge concerning natural phenomena and crafts, the dependence on magic to fill in the gaps of knowledge, the myths to account for origins, the beliefs in the supernatural to give him security, indicate that his mental processes are very similar to our own. Our knowledge is more complete, but that is just a matter of degree. We have recourse to prayer, psychologically kin to magic, when we need confidence. We too have our origin myths, embedded in such institutions as the Church. Likewise we have our religious beliefs, which fulfil the same function for us as they do for the Lesu natives. It would seem then that the dynamics of thinking is the same for these Melanesians as it is for us, and that the difference is only in the content.

2: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-30)1931 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu



765 act of dancing and the symbol, or what the dancing represents.
535 While dance rehearsals are taboo in the period immediately preceding death and in the period following death, dancing is part of the burial rites, participated in by the whole community, and represents an outward expression of their feelings aroused by the death. But the dance rehearsals have no connection with death (they may be rehearsals for circumcision, marriage, or some other rite) and as such have no psychological association with the recent event and would mar the continuum of expressed community feeling after a burial.

769 The years following the death are marked by the making of a
532 *malaŋgon* and the giving of many feasts. The *malaŋgon* is an
778 elaborate carving which varies in size and design. The carvings are divided into a number of large classifications, each of which is subdivided into smaller groups, and each division large and small has its own name. On a large number of them there is a figure for each dead relative for whom the *malaŋgon* is made, and sharks, birds, and fish are frequent in the design. There are also other carvings on which no figure of the dead relative occurs. The right
424 to make a *malaŋgon* is owned by a clan, which can sell the right to another clan. The original owner then loses the right to make it and must buy the right to make a different *malaŋgon* from another clan. When the *malaŋgon* is made and displayed, there are elaborate rites continuing for months and including dancing, feasts and special rites, which vary according to each particular *malaŋgon*.

769 The *malaŋgon* is usually made by a maternal nephew or by a
532 son, if the dead person is a woman.[11] Occasionally other close clan
554 relatives may make one too. The time for the *malaŋgon* rites may
778 be a year after death, or it may be five years after death. The time depends on how long it takes to collect the wealth necessary for holding the rites. Frequently one carving will be made for several dead relatives at one time. As far as the writer was able to ascertain, the making of the *malaŋgon* and the rites concerning it

[11]The clan relative does not actually make the *malaŋgon* but pays a skilled carver to make it according to his directions.

2:Powdermaker E-5 (1929-30)1931 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu



have no effect on the *tinuato* (ghost), the *gas* (double), or anything connected with the dead person. The rites, while nominally carried out in honour of the dead person, seem to have as their real function to increase the prestige of the survivor. Over and over again I was told that if the *malaŋgon* was not made, the clan relative who should have made it would fall in prestige, that he would be the object of much gossip, and that everyone would say that he did not have sufficient wealth to make one. Nothing more hurtful to a native's prestige than this could be said.[12]

Besides the *malaŋgon* feasts there are many other feasts given after death over an indefinite period of years. They are made usually by one of the relatives of the extended family who observed the sleeping or sexual taboos immediately after death. The maternal nephew and the son, if the dead person is a woman, are the most frequent givers of these feasts. Many other feasts, which have an obvious purpose not connected with death, are held in the cemetery and are considered in some way not very clear to me to be for all the dead buried in that cemetery. A feast given on the occasion of a child having its first tooth, or one held simply because there is plenty of food, will be held in the cemetery and is considered in some subtle manner to be held for the dead buried there as well as for the explicit reason given.

To summarize the description of the rites, it has been shown that the chief mourners are the parents, children, and the consort. Next come the other clan relatives and after them the rest of the community. The direction of the rites and economic responsibility for them is in the hands of a close clan relative, the spouse taking no active part at all. Those observing the food taboos are the same close clan relatives and also the spouse. The sexual taboo involves a larger group, the whole extended family. Intimate duties connected with the corpse, such as washing and carrying it to the cemetery, are performed by people of the opposite moiety, who are not kindred to the dead person, and therefore not chief mourners.

[12]The subject of the *malaŋgon* is a complicated one and a monograph might be written on this alone. The writer will present material in another context.

5: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1932 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu



stones, and when these are hot they are leveled and the food put between them. Leaves and sand are then put over it, and the food remains there until it is baked. Men are working in groups of two or three, but not very continuously, wrapping a fish or a pig in leaves preparatory to baking, or bringing in leaves from the bush to wrap around the food. Their work in this connection is never as steady as the women's work. A man may tend to the liga and then loll around for a half hour or more, until there is something else to do. Frequently the men will take care of the babies, while the mothers scrape the taro. The main work of cooking falls upon the women; although the men do assist, this does not break into the sexual division of labor.

When the women have finished preparing the taro (for a big feast this takes at least three or four hours), and after it has been placed in the liga, the ground on which they have been working is cleaned and they take their ease. Until now they have been working seriously and without stopping, except perhaps to nurse a baby. There has been no talking except for the necessary remarks about the taro. Now they sit in the same place smoking their pipes and chatting. Gossip is exchanged, jokes are told and followed with appreciative laughter, and here and there a woman is engaged in the pastime of searching for lice in a friend's or relative's hair. If a woman of the village has just become pregnant, there will be playful fighting between the women of the opposite moieties. This part of the pregnancy rites occurs whenever there is a group of women present. The men in the meantime are a short distance away, on the beach, in the compound in front of the men's house or some other house, in groups of two or three, smoking and chatting but not in any large group. This period—while the food is baking in the liga—is an easy, convivial, feminine communal occasion, as is the eating which follows for the men.

## Description of Feast

Three or four hours later, when the food has been baked, the men and boys carry it in their hands into the cemetery. For the men the cemetery serves as a banqueting hall and most of the men's ritual feasts are held there.[11] Women are never permitted in the cemetery for a feast, or at any other time, except at a burial, and then they leave immediately after the interment.[12]

[11] The economic feasts in payment to workers are not always held in the cemetery, and the malanggon ones are held in a special structure erected for them. The connection of eating in the cemetery with mortuary beliefs must be considered at another time.

[12] However, I was invited to all the feasts, and the invitations were always accepted.

5: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1932 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu



## Other Customs centering about Food

There are various interesting customs which center around food apart from feasts or family meals. These may just be mentioned here as showing the important sociological rôle of food. Betrothal is consummated by the girl preparing some food for the man and their sitting down with the basket of food between them and eating together. In many folk-tales, when we are told that a man and a woman, or a man and two women, sit down and eat together, this expresses the fact that they are married. A woman never eats with her lover.

The remains of food are connected with black magic, and so one is careful never to leave any left-overs about.

Even the ghosts are concerned with food. After a successful fishing expedition a half taro and a small piece of fish is left on the liga for the ghosts of dead clan ancestors whose aid has been asked in fishing magic.

The prohibition of certain foods on particular occasions is the essential part of several taboos. The most important of these is the taboo against eating taro for certain relatives of a dead person over a prescribed period of mourning. During pregnancy a woman may not eat a certain fish. This is one with many bones, and it is thought that they would hurt the embryo child. A pregnant woman will be given a half of a baked taro by a woman who has had children. The latter eats the other half, and this act is believed to insure a successful delivery of the infant.

Food is the most frequent form of gift between husband and wife, between mother's brother and his nephew or niece, between brother and sister, and between friends. It is also an invariable mark of hospitality to offer food to a stranger.

## Social Function

From the preceding description it is obvious that feasts in this society have other functions beside the satisfaction of physical hunger. Sometimes there is more than one feast in a day and the men then eat as a duty rather than because they are hungry. One day there were three feasts in near-by hamlets, and all attended by the same men. Two were connected with death rites, and one was to mark the occasion of an infant's cutting his first tooth. By the time the third feast was reached, the men were not hungry, but all ate.

Even the family meal, which has the very definite physiological function of satisfying hunger, has also the sociological rôle of uniting the various members. In a similar way the sentiments binding the society together are given collective expression at the feasts, although the very strong line of sex